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3 April 1985

DCI/NIO Conference -- 3 April 1985

1. Greece

The election of Sartzetakis as President of Greece is an important political victory for Papandreou. Although achieved by constitutionally dubious means (colored ballots and casting of the decisive vote by the acting President Alevras) it leaves Papandreou free to control the timetable for the Parliamentary elections which must be held by October. Most of his advisors seem to agree that June would be the best time: after the controversy over the dumping of Karamanlis has abated somewhat and before the economy goes into its expected decline this summer. A June election would also allow Papandreou to have this session of Parliament hold the required two votes on his proposed constitutional amendments. The amendments, which are designed to limit the powers of the presidency, would not become valid until affirmed by the next session of Parliament, however.

The opposition New Democracy Party has not only failed to grab the political initiative from Papandreou but its characterization of Sartzetakis' election as unconstitutional and therefore invalid does not seem to have drawn much popular support. Interestingly, however, for the first time a national poll has given New Democracy a three percent lead over Pasok. A New Democracy rally, now scheduled in Athens on 5 April, will provide an indication of whether New Democracy can keep up this seeming popular momentum despite its defeat in Parliament.

As for US-Greek relations they have been further complicated by an Australian newspaper's story that the US has "repositioned a satellite controlled from a base in central Australia . . . to spy on Greece". The Greek government has accepted a noncommittal US reply to its query on the story but the issue is now beginning to get Greek press play.

2. SDI

Recent developments suggest important divisions of opinion within European governments over SDI:

- UK Foreign Secretary Howe's recent widely publicized speech was widely seen as reflecting British government dissatisfaction over the US interpretation of the Reagan-Thatcher December communique.

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[redacted]  
[redacted] Thatcher, however, subsequently put out the word that she had not cleared the speech (a claim that runs counter to earlier indications to the contrary).

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- Although France's President Mitterrand has been the most vocal critic of SDI, a French general writing under the pseudonym "Hoplites" has criticized this French stance and urged France to develop its own SDI.
- In Germany, [redacted] there are clear differences between Kohl and Genscher, with the latter generally opposed to SDI not only on strategic grounds but possibly also for the domestic political reason of creating a separate profile for the FDP.

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The cause of the European proponents of SDI has not been helped by the lack of clarity in US explanations of SDI, Sec/Def's recent invitation to the Europeans to tell us within 60 days what SDI research projects they wish to engage in (an invitation which has been widely interpreted as an ultimatum) and perceived US pressures on European countries to express support for SDI before they quite know what it involves.

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